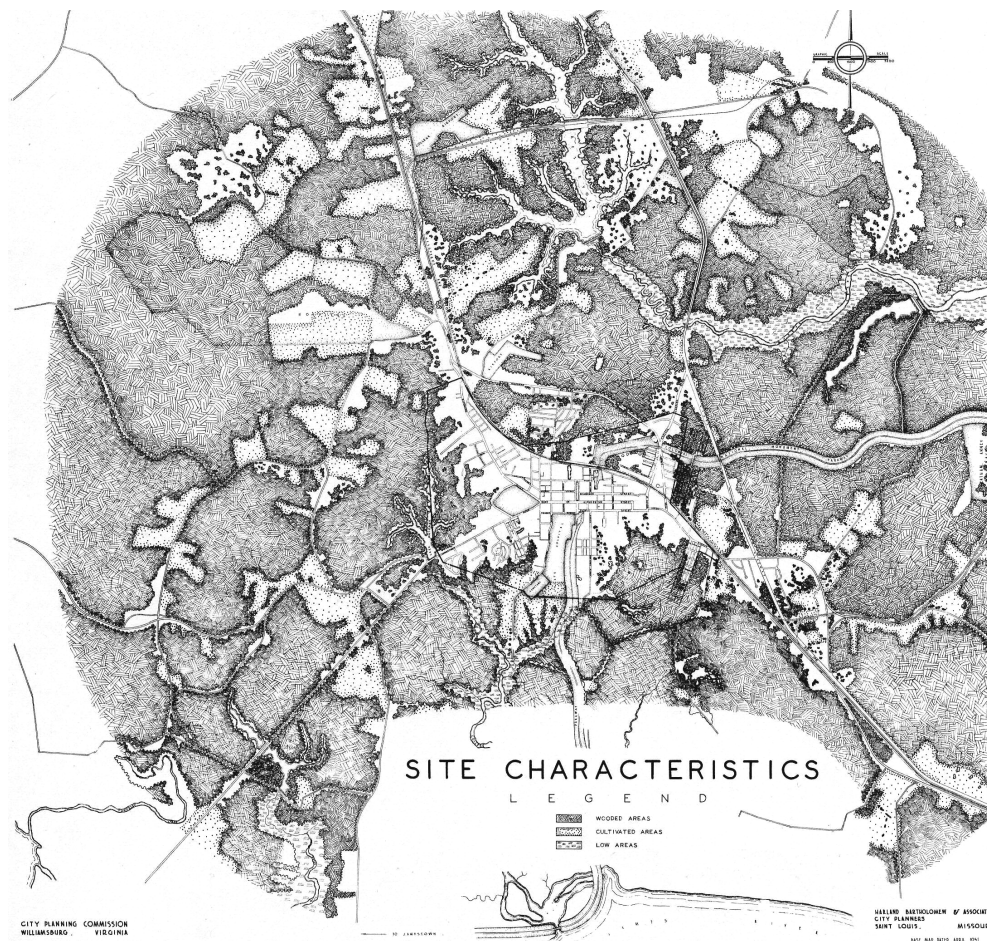


Chapter 2 **Past Comprehensive Plans**

The City adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1953, followed by the plans of 1968, 1981, 1989 and 1998. Planning Commission reviewed the recommendations and analysis contained in these Plans as one of the initial steps in preparing the 2006 Plan.

1953 Comprehensive Plan

The 1953 Comprehensive Plan was prepared by Harland Bartholomew and Associates, and followed the adoption of the City's original Zoning Ordinance in 1947. Williamsburg in 1953 had 1,185 dwelling units, a net population of 3,327 persons (not counting approximately 2,000 students at the College), average family size of 2.8 persons, 24% African American population. The 1980 population was projected to be 5,000 persons.



Continued increases in the number of visitors to Colonial Williamsburg were anticipated, as was the need for the provision of increased accommodations for visitors. Also foreseen was a greater volume of retail trade with consequent increased traffic volumes. The College of William & Mary, Eastern State Hospital, and adjacent military establishments were also counted as important contributors to the local economy. The Plan recommended that these enlarged facilities be arranged so that every possible protection is

afforded to the Restored Area. Future industrial development was discouraged, “so that the character of the City will not be disturbed and the major elements of the economy will be protected.”

The 1953 Plan recommended that the City should provide for a large expansion in local residential areas in the most convenient and attractive locations. Areas for future residential growth were identified as northwest along Richmond Road partly using lands owned by William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg, filling in between Jamestown Road and College Landing Road (now South Henry Street), the northeast corner of the City, extending Highland Park to the north, and locating apartment houses near the center of the City with a density of 18 to 22 units per acre.

Substandard housing was analyzed in much detail, and the 1953 Plan recommended the creation of a Housing Authority, the use of urban renewal funds in the downtown area, and the adoption of a minimum housing ordinance. All of these recommendations were subsequently implemented by the City.

The Plan recommended several future highway improvements that were eventually completed: Rt. 132, described as a “freeway type approach highway from the north,” completion of the Colonial Parkway to Jamestown, extension of Lafayette Street to both Richmond Road and York Street, and the extension of Newport Avenue from South England to South Henry Street. A recommendation to extend Francis Street to Jamestown Road was never implemented.

A major recommendation for education was the consolidation of the Williamsburg and James City County public schools. This was approved in 1953, and resulted in the construction of James Blair High School (now a Middle School), the conversion of Matthew Whaley to an elementary school, and the enlarging of Bruton Heights School for a African American elementary and high school.

Ambitious plans were outlined for the City’s park system, but some of the major recommendations were never implemented – a 58 acre park south of Indian Springs (now part of the Coves and Port Anne), a 27 acre park south of Highland Park (now Governor’s Inn), and a 32 acre park at the end of Matoaka Court (now part of William & Mary Hall). A 58 acre park on Waller Mill Road adjacent to the Waller Mill Reservoir was recommended for park development, and it was noted that “it is not proposed to open the Williamsburg reservoir for boating or fishing as the difficulties of controlling such activities would be very great.” The present day Waller Mill Park, 2,000 acres surrounding the Reservoir, has boating and fishing as two of its most popular activities. A small boat harbor was proposed on Queens Creek at Queen Mary Port, and this park (without a boat harbor) is still proposed as Capitol Landing Park.

1968 Comprehensive Plan

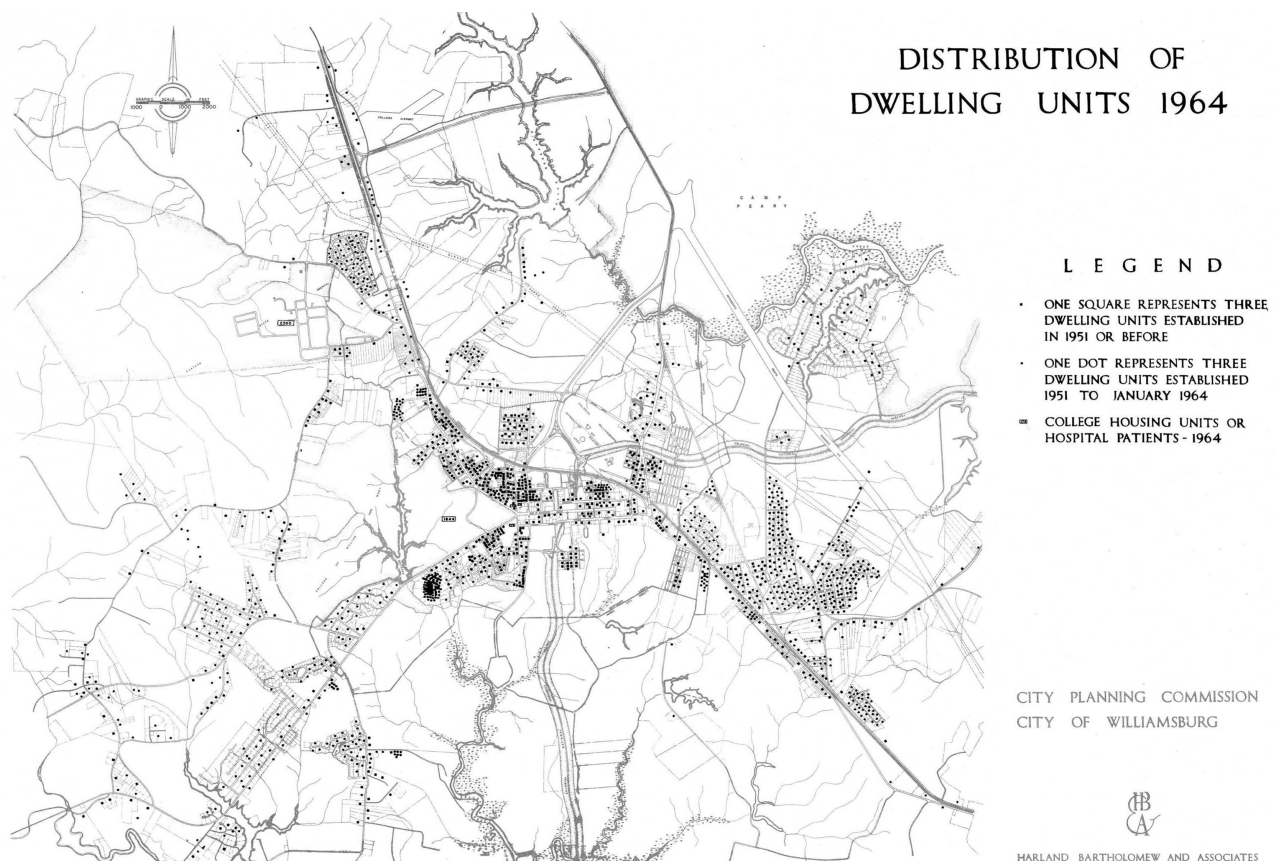
The City’s second Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1968, and was again prepared for the City by Harland Bartholomew and Associates. The Williamsburg area in 1968 had a population of 13,300 (this included the area within about three miles of City line, but excluding college students and Eastern State Hospital patients), compared to 7,150 in 1950. Multifamily development and tourist homes were found to have clustered in the old parts of the City and in the vicinity of the College, with 7.5% of the dwelling units in the planning area apartments. The 1985 population for the Williamsburg area was estimated to be 35,000 persons.

The 1968 Plan noted that the 1953 Plan did not fully anticipate the increase in tourism and the enormous popularity of Williamsburg as a regional attraction, and missed the character and timing of much residential growth, such as James and York Terrace and Queens Lake. Also missed by the 1953 Plan was the development of the Interstate Highway System, the development of Jamestown Festival (now Jamestown Settlement), and the removal of Eastern State Hospital from the center of Williamsburg.

The 1968 Plan recommended the expansion of visitor facilities to accommodate the expected growth in tourism (1,500,000 visitors a year projected for 1985), and noted that the growth in future purchasing power will encourage an extensive expansion of retail shopping facilities of high character. Several expansions of commercial areas were described: major shopping centers proposed to the east (James

York Plaza) and to the west (the expansion of Williamsburg Shopping Center and Monticello Shopping Center), additional tourist facilities along Capitol Landing Road, and a new tourist area along Bypass Road near Richmond Road. The Plan observed that manufacturing activity was unlikely to expand except at the expense of the colonial atmosphere so vital to the overall economic health of Williamsburg, and concluded that “Williamsburg simply cannot permit its environs to develop as a great mass of motels, curio shops, restaurants, and general tourist ballyhoo which tends to surround anything which regularly attracts large numbers of people. The distinctive character of Williamsburg must be maintained at all costs. Visitor facilities must be restricted to appropriate areas, and when these are filled up, additional accommodations must be built elsewhere on the Peninsula.”

A large increase in population over the next 20 years was predicted, and the 1968 Plan suggested the provision of appropriate locations for all types of residences, including apartments of “high character.” Approximately 275 acres was shown as “medium-density residential” and appropriate for apartments, including the greater West Williamsburg area along Richmond Road (West Williamsburg, West Williamsburg Heights, College Terrace and Matoaka Court) and the Indian Springs/Griffin Avenue area, although it was noted that most of this area will be developed as single family. Residential density was specified at 21 to 22 units/acre in central area, and 14 to 15 units/acre in the outlying areas. The Plan discouraged the random scattering of apartments in future single-family areas, and suggested locations near main academic, employment and recreation centers, and with access to major thoroughfares.



An extensive network of future highway improvements was included in the 1968 Comprehensive Plan, exceeding those listed in any of the City’s future Comprehensive Plans. These improvements included the Williamsburg Circumferential (Rt. 199), which joined I-64 along Airport Road; an Intermediate Circumferential which extended along the west side of Lake Matoaka to Monticello Avenue (the only section that was built is Compton Drive), and then to the Ironbound/Richmond Road area and across to

Hubbard Lane; the extension of Second Street to Brooks Street; the extension of Monticello Avenue to Ironbound Road; and the extension of Mt. Vernon Avenue to Ironbound Road (now the Treyburn Drive extension project).

An extensive list of downtown improvements was proposed, including the construction of numerous parking lots ringing the Historic Area. The most extensive parking improvement was to demolish Matthew Whaley School for major parking lot between Governor's Palace and North Henry Street, which was to adjoin a special purpose park south of the Matthew Whaley School site, to be offered primarily to tourists as "an ideal place for a picnic lunch, and a much-needed gesture of municipal hospitality." A new Municipal Center was proposed, including quarters for all City departments, additional public meeting space, storage space for equipment, and adequate off-street parking.

Echoing what was initially proposed in the 1953 Plan, the 1968 Plan recommended the establishment of an urban renewal program to deal with the City's substandard housing. This led to the establishment of the Williamsburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Recommendations for future educational needs did not anticipate the spreading out of growth in James City County, with all proposed school locations in close proximity to the City. New elementary school locations included the Casey property on Richmond Road, the present New Town development in James City County, the present Richmond Hill subdivision, and a location west of Highland Park. New high school locations included New Town and the Kiwanis Park area (now James Blair Middle School, formerly James Blair High School).

1981 Comprehensive Plan

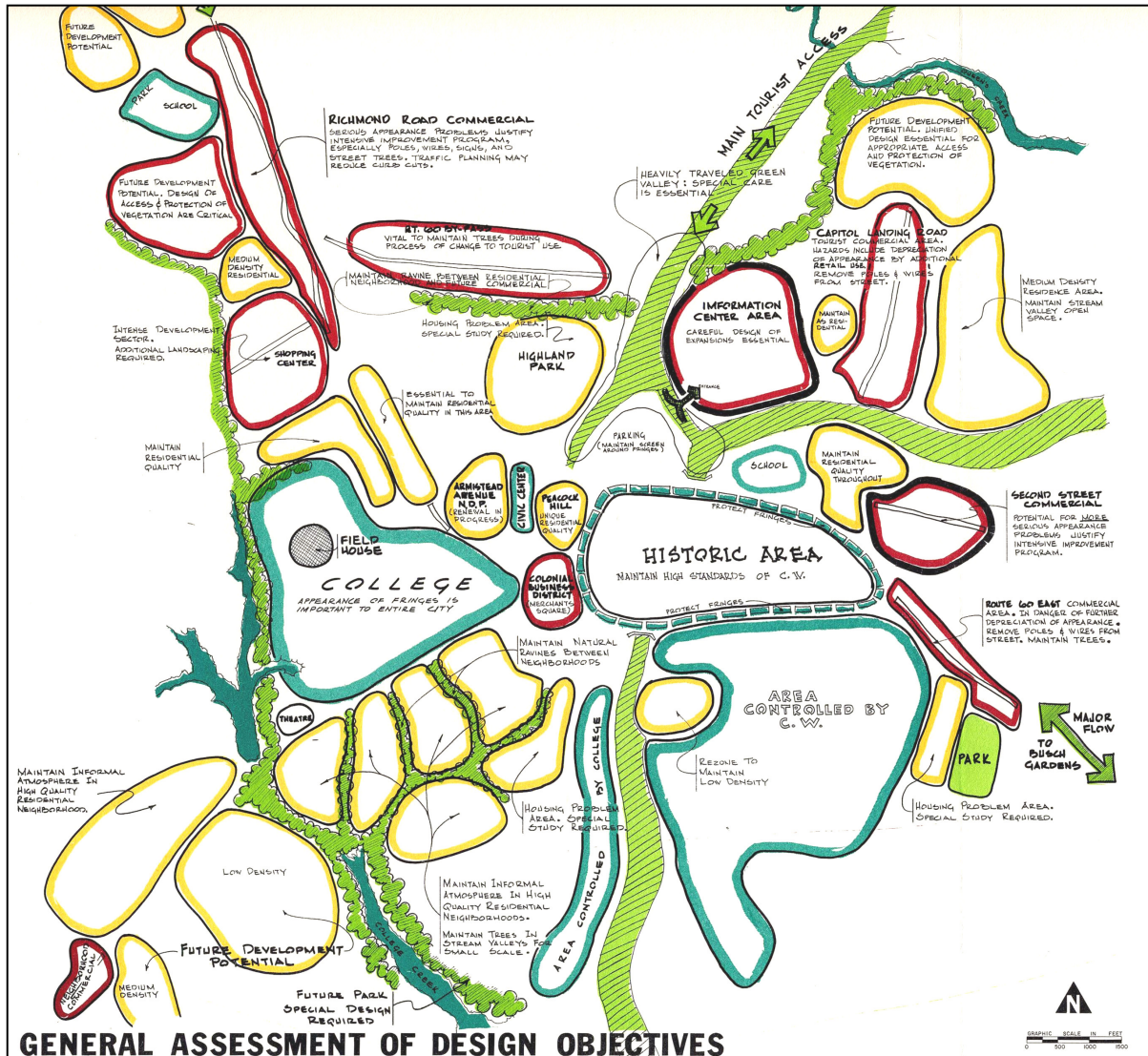
The 1981 Comprehensive Plan was the third and last plan prepared for the City by Harland Bartholomew and Associates. Williamsburg in 1980 had a population of 9,870, growing from 9,069 in 1970. The population growth, however, was less than had been predicted. The 2000 population for the Williamsburg area was estimated to be 39,400 persons, with Williamsburg alone expected to grow to 11,200 persons.

As was the case with the 1953 Plan, the 1968 Plan did not foresee some of the major developments between 1968 and 1981, including the establishment of the Anheuser-Busch Brewery, Busch Gardens, and the Kingsmill development.

The Plan observed that Colonial Williamsburg attendance will not grow as rapidly as it has in the past unless a major effort is mounted to increase visitor capacity, and pointed out that attendance growth was less than the 5% per year that had been forecast. Directly related to the attendance was the number of motel rooms, which grew 40% since 1973 (3,703 in the City, 1,476 in James City County and 284 in York County). The occupancy rate was 63.5%. The Plan stated that the future growth of City revenues will depend on sales to area residents, but noted that an increasing proportion of this trade is shifting out of the City. It was suggested that in order to address this issue, the City should develop a major shopping center to capture the growth predicted for the trade area.

Major multifamily construction had occurred between the last two Plans, with 75% of new City dwelling units built between 1964 and 1973 being multi-family, and five of these projects were located along Merrimac Trail. "Medium Density Residential" areas were deemed generally appropriate for apartments of up to three stories, with a density of 10 to 17 dwelling units per acre. The Plan noted that it was important to maintain the small scale of all residential areas regardless of development type or density.

Major highway improvements recommended by the 1981 Comprehensive Plan included the extension of Second Street from Page Street to Bypass Road, with a connection to Monticello Avenue by a bridge over the railroad tracks. A connection was planned between Parkway Drive and Merrimac Trail, and Boundary Street was planned to be extended to the south to connect with South Henry Street near Mimosa Drive.



As was the case with the two previous Comprehensive Plans, much emphasis was placed on future improvements in the downtown area. The Library Auditorium was under construction, and recommendations for major improvements included relocating the City Shop from Capitol Landing Road to its present location, relocating the large truck and bulk mail post office operations outside the central area, and consideration of a parking garage of commercial expansion takes place in Merchants Square.

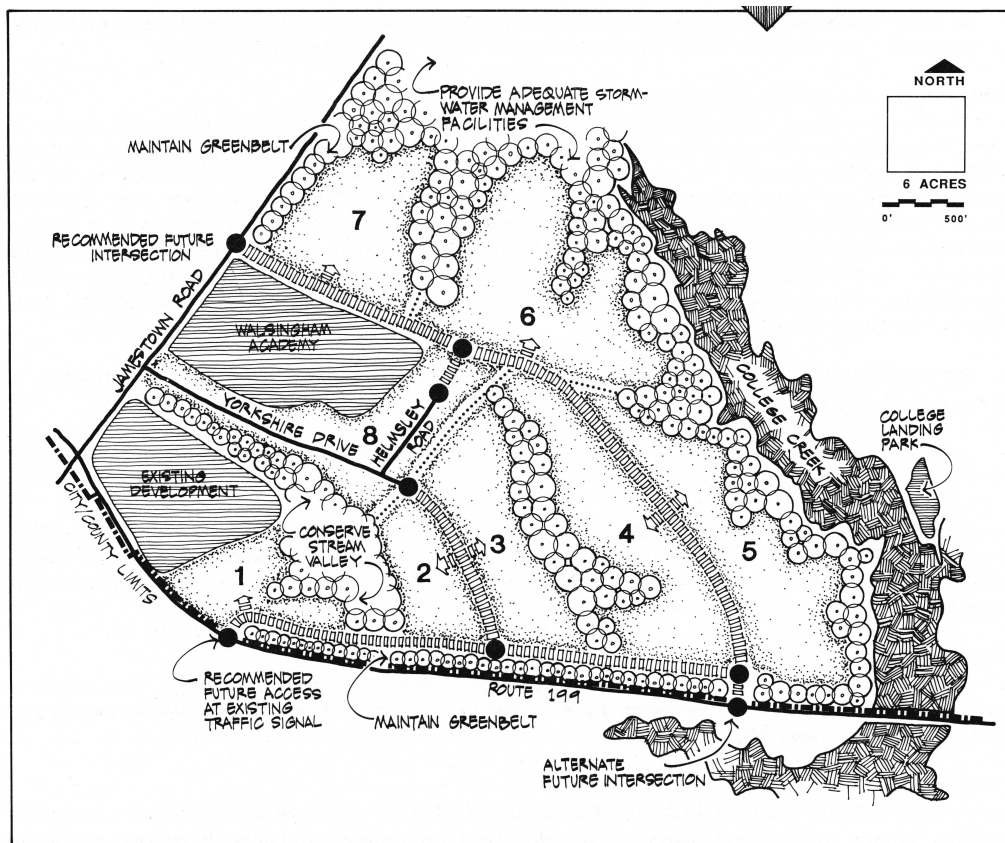
Major progress was made in improving substandard housing. Fulfilling a recommendation made in the 1953 and 1968 plans, the Williamsburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority was established in 1969. This resulted in the development and implementation of the Armistead Avenue Urban Renewal Plan, which resulted in the construction of the Crispus Attucks subdivision at the corner of Lafayette Street and Armistead Avenue, a site for a new fire station, and redevelopment of the Triangle Block.

Concerns were expressed about the impact of college students on the downtown residential areas, with the 1981 Plan recommending that “[t]he City ... initiate a special study of the residentially zoned areas adjacent to the College to determine the extent of the impact of students as evidenced by conversion of single-family housing to apartments and the number of student apartments in these areas. A plan should be developed from these studies to minimize the impact of college related activities such as on street parking.”

Many recommendations were made for public park improvements. Implemented were College Landing Park and the expansion of Kiwanis, Quarterpath and Waller Mill Parks. Recommended but not implemented are parks on Merrimac Trail, Mimosa Drive, New Hope Road and Capitol Landing Road.

1989 Comprehensive Plan

The City's fourth Comprehensive Plan was prepared for the City by the Cox Company. This Plan included analysis and recommendations for the four square miles annexed from James City County in 1984, the first expansion of the City's boundaries since 1967. Williamsburg had an estimated population of 11,300 in 1985, compared to 9,870 in 1980. The population projections for 2000 ranged from a low of 12,620 to a high of 14,423 – the actual 2000 Census population was 11,998.



College Creek Planning Area

The 1989 Plan developed the concept of “net developable acreage,” which analyzed the physical constraints on the land (slopes, wetlands, soils, vegetative cover and existing development), and these factors were considered in determining development suitability, allowing the land to “speak for itself.” This concept was applied to ten designated Planning Areas, representing 40 percent of the City's land area – the areas most suitable for development and redevelopment. Detailed analysis of the Planning areas led to “mini-plans” and maps for each.

The 1989 Plan placed increased emphasis on the natural environment, and great care was taken to identify sensitive environmental areas. Urban development was channeled into identified “prime developable areas,” while environmental preservation and open space conservation were strongly recommended for the sensitive areas. The identification of these area helped the City in its implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Protection Act, identifying areas that were also designated Resource Protection Areas in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

The Plan also recognized the importance of the built environment, and preservation of historic and architectural resources was identified as a major planning goal. A complete restructuring of the City's architectural review process was proposed, the first major change since architectural review began in 1958. This led to the creation of an architectural preservation district to protect and enhance the character of the Colonial Williamsburg historic area and the surrounding older neighborhoods, supplemented by corridor protection districts designed to improve the major entrance corridors into the City.

The 1989 Plan recommended the complete revision of the City's zoning ordinance, the first major change since 1966. This revision was designed to help to fulfill the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan by strengthening the linkages between the Plan and the zoning, site plan and subdivision review processes. The new zoning ordinance was adopted in 1991.

Major transportation improvements recommended by the Plan included the extension of Monticello Avenue across the CSX railroad to connect to Bypass Road in York County (rejected by City Council in 1992), the Parkway Drive/Merrimac Trail connection (deleted in the 1998 Plan), the completion of Route 199, and the extension of Monticello Avenue west to Route 199.

Plans for the downtown area included incremental improvements to the Municipal Center area, which included relocating the Council Chambers to the Stryker Building and renovating the original Municipal Building located at 400 North Boundary Street. The Plan recognized the planned relocation of the Post Office to Lafayette Street, and noted that a study was underway to determine the future of the Williamsburg-James City County Courthouse and Jail on South Henry Street. Expansion of the Merchants Square commercial area was proposed, and for the first time a mixed-use area was recommended adjacent to Merchants Square between Scotland Street and Lafayette Street. This was the first step in the redevelopment of the City Square area, which took place 10 years after this recommendation.

The emphasis of the 1989 Plan shifted from improvements to substandard housing to the creation of new low and moderate income housing. Sites for new housing were identified on Ironbound Road and for the first time on Strawberry Plains Road. The latter site was proposed for redevelopment by the Williamsburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, which began the project in 2003.

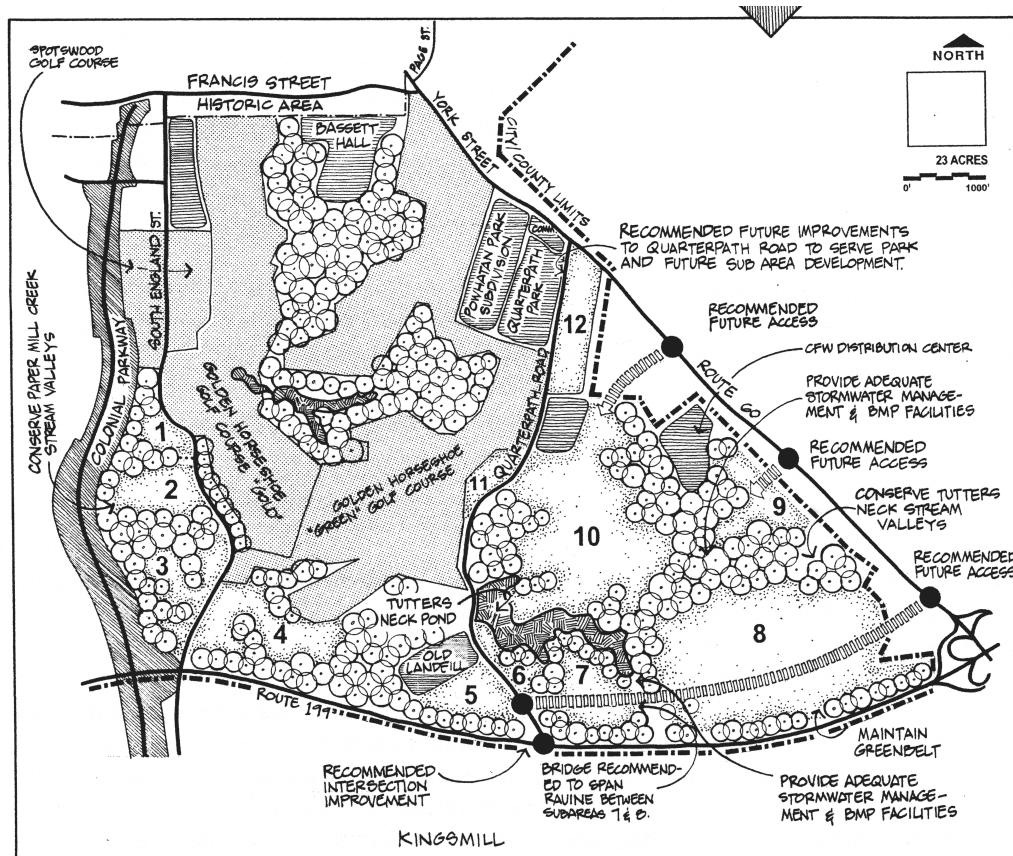
The plans for new parkland were primarily for passive parks, with a major recommendation for acquisition of the College Creek Nature Area on South Henry Street. The establishment of a park at Capitol Landing, originally recommended in 1953, was again listed as a future goal. The major improvement to the active parks was the recommendation for a gymnasium at Quarterpath Park.

1998 Comprehensive Plan

The City's fifth Comprehensive Plan was again prepared for the City by the Cox Company, and further refined the "net developable acreage" and planning area concepts. Williamsburg had an estimated population of 12,100 in 1995, compared with the 1990 Census figure of 11,409. The population projection for 2020 was 15,020, which represented a residential build-out of the City based on the land use plan and zoning regulations. The projected population for 2010 was 13,813, and this figure has almost been met by the 2004 Weldon-Cooper Center provisional estimate of 13,600 persons.

The 1998 Plan continued the concept of "net developable acreage," letting the physical constraints on the land determine developmental suitability. This was reflected in nine designated Planning Areas that were refined from the areas included in the 1989 Plan. The College Creek Planning Area was dropped because the area was mostly developed, and revised planning areas were created for Capitol Landing Road and Richmond Road. The vacant areas with the most development continued to be in the Richmond Road Planning Area (the High Street property), and in the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Planning Area (the Riverside property). Both of these sites are under review in 2005 for master planned mixed use

developments, and are consistent with the 1998 Plan's recommendations for integrated, mixed-use developments providing additional employment and tax revenues for the City.



Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Planning Area

The preservation of historic and architectural resources was again a major planning goal. The Plan added archaeological preservation as an important preservation activity, acknowledging the adoption of an archaeological preservation section to the zoning ordinance in 1995. A new chapter on urban design was added, giving increased emphasis to maintaining the quality of new development in the City, particularly along the entrance corridors in the Architectural Preservation area in the Center City. The guidelines in the Plan support the detailed guidelines that have been developed and refined by the Architectural Review Board and Planning Department staff.

More extensive plans were proposed for the Center City area than were included in the 1989 Plan. Merchants Square expansion was still supported, but a new parking facility (possibly a parking garage) was recommended north of Prince George Street (the Prince George Parking Garage opened in 2004). This area was originally recommended for public parking in 1953. The Plan recognized the progress that had been made in the City Square area (Library expansion, Parking Terrace, Community Building), and supported continued new development and redevelopment in the mixed use area connecting City Square with Merchants Square.

Major transportation improvements included the improvement of Richmond Road between Brooks Street and New Hope Road, and the construction of Treyburn Drive between Monticello Avenue and Ironbound Road. Several major intersections improvements were proposed (Capitol Landing Road/Merrimac Trail, Jamestown Road/Route 199 and Richmond Road/Patriot Lane), and improvements were also recommended for Quarterpath Road. For the first time, specific proposals were included in the Plan for

bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and the continued upgrading of the Transportation Center into a multi-modal transportation hub was supported.

A separate Housing chapter was included in the 1998 Plan. The Plan proposed limiting the expansion of high density multifamily housing, since the City had a disproportionate share of this type of housing, and recommended that single family housing should make up at least 50 percent of the City's housing stock. Certain residential areas were recognized as "threatened" by several critical issues: the gradual influx of college students, increased through traffic, and substandard or deteriorating housing. A coordinated approach to these issues was recommended. Three areas were specifically recommended for housing rehabilitation and provision of new low and moderate income housing: the Wales subdivision on Ironbound Road, the Strawberry Plains area, and the Roses Trailer Court area on Quarterpath Road. A Community Development Block Grant program has been completed for Wales, is underway for Strawberry Plains, and is under study for the Roses Trailer Court area.

Economic development also received a chapter of its own in the 1998 Plan. This chapter emphasized the need for an increased focus on redevelopment, since the City's supply of vacant land is decreasing each year. The basic premise of this chapter, and of the Plan, is to support and promote the existing tourism base while exploring other economic development opportunities for expanded employment and revenue base throughout the City. The Plan also supported the establishment of an office for economic development as an administrative function of the City government.

Continued emphasis was placed on the development and maintenance of passive parks. Included in the list of recommendations was Capitol Landing, the College Creek Nature Area, the College Creek Conservation Area (acquired in 1996), and Papermill Creek Park (acquired in 1998). For active parks, expansion of the Quarterpath Gymnasium and a new Operations Building at Waller Mill Park (as well as expanded hours) were recommended.